

What's NEW

A bi-weekly newsletter for Greenfield Community College staff and faculty

Sept. 18, 1989

The Learning Center: A resource for students, faculty

For students, the Learning Center is a place to go to find answers to questions they may have on any academic subject. For faculty the Learning Center tutoring program offers support outside of the classroom. Because of their availability, tutors can be an alternative to the student/faculty time conflict for students who want extra help with class work. With supportive goals and a willingness to help students, tutors offer faculty another way to assist in the learning process.

"Tutors are the link between the text and the student," said one veteran tutor at the Tutor Training Day seminar held in early September. Lynn Benander, Math Center Coordinator, agrees, noting that "students who use the tutoring service find themselves sorting through

material and analyzing their questions to help answer these questions themselves."

The key to success in the tutoring program is that it focuses on students helping students. Ideally, the tutors role is to guide the student through the learning process, helping the student sort through and analyze their questions, facilitating the learning process by asking questions and encouraging the searching-through-the-text method to answer questions and solve problems. This is in contrast to the show-and-tell method of teaching.

Supported by staff, counselors and faculty, tutors are trained to help students maximize their own resources. Encouraging students to actively answer their own questions helps students build upon what they already know. This builds

confidence and helps the student retain the material covered.

One of the most common issues for students is anxiety, such as fear of asking for help, lack of confidence, pre-test jitters. Tutors can help alleviate these kinds of anxieties by helping students feel more comfortable in an academic environment.

Promoting the tutoring program in class, as many faculty members do, encourages students to use a valuable tool to enhance their learning experience. According to the Learning Center staff, faculty can help promote the program in many ways. For example, take a tour of the Learning Center with your freshmen classes, or invite tutors to introduce themselves to your classes. Ask a current student to recount his/her tutoring program experience in class and encourage students to use the Learning Center services.

Learning Center staff say that reminding students when and where help is available and explaining these resources to them might help dispel any fears students have about seeking help. Although peer tutoring is not the answer to all of learning's complexities, it is a good resource for both faculty and students. For more information, contact the Learning Center at ext. 221.

—Douglas A. Ross, Jr.

The President's Corner

The Pioneer Valley Institute has become a reality. Through the hard work and planning of Ben Drabek, Dick Little, Carol Letson, B.J. Roche, Bob Merriam, Joan Ibish, Bob Keir and others, the idea for a center on campus for coordinating cultural, environmental and historical activities relating to the Pioneer Valley has been revived. Last spring, the GCC Foundation authorized a \$7,500 grant to put the institute on its feet. Louise Minks, a well-known artist in the area who many of you remember from her previous work at the college on the "Celebration of Growing Older," will coordinate this year's developments. She will be speaking with many of you about the project during the coming months.

The institute hopes to sponsor a

range of activities including lectures, field trips, musical events, workshops and courses on the heritage of the valley. This summer's children's day camp, jointly sponsored by GCC and the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, was a huge success that illustrates the potential for joint planning between GCC and other valley organizations, which will be a hallmark of the institute's activities. Five one-day guided tours of significant places in the Pioneer Valley will inaugurate this fall's activities.

We are really excited that the college is able to be playing a central role in fostering educational activities related to our precious Pioneer Valley heritage. We believe that this is another way in which we serve as truly "the community's college."

—Kay Sloan

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